

## March 2000

# Advisors Praise GCOM Approach

GreenCOM's Technical Advisory Group (TAG)—a team of experts in environment and communications—recommended that USAID maintain a strong environmental education and communication (EE&C) component in its programs and help develop sustainable public/private funding for EE&C programs. It recommended that GreenCOM's programmatic vision and capacity be continued.

In opening remarks, David Hales, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Environment Center/USAID, praised GreenCOM for providing vision and leadership in the field of EE&C. Emily Vargas-Baron, Deputy Assistant Administrator for the Human Capacity Development Center/USAID, said that there are now 57 countries with environmental crises—a number that has increased in recent years. In these countries refugees are spilling over bor-

ders and systems are breaking down.  
Restoration of environmental health is crucial.

"USAID has a right to hold us accountable to show that we are 'heating up' the level of social concern for environmental issues," said AED Vice President Bill Smith. "It's not just a matter of how many deliverables we produce, but are we

A panel explored how "heating up" has worked in several GreenCOM projects in Tanzania, Nepal, Panama, and El Salvador. In Tanzania, GreenCOM started a national competition for an environmental award that was later continued by private and government sponsors. The competi-

GreenCOM's work has spanned 28 countries and over 30 delivery orders. Projects have ranged from \$25,000 to \$4 million and have lasted from 2 1/2 weeks to 5 years. The breadth of these projects reflects GreenCOM's attention to priority areas for USAID environmental assistance. Both formal and nonformal environmental education projects have been conducted in the following topics: water, protected areas and parks, forests, coastal areas, solid waste, biodiversity, and greenhouse gas reduction. The map on the right shows the countries that GreenCOM has worked in over the past seven years. GreenCOM's forthcoming methods handbook, *Communication for Environmental Action: Lessons from International Activities*, synthesizes GreenCOM's experiences.



*GreenCOM has brought Environmental Education & Communication to 28 countries*

## TAG Experts' Recommendations

### Leadership and Funding

- Prevent GreenCOM's vision and capacity from dissipating
- Maintain strong EE&C presence in USAID program and funding

### Support and Sustainability

- Translate the best environmental science into communication campaigns to build constituencies and public policy
- Build alliances with counterparts
- Build alliances with private sector
- Educate policymakers and donors on the value of EE&C
- Create cross-institutional teams for EE&C research and programs
- Strengthen EE&C networks such as the North American Association for Environmental Education and the National Association of Interpreters. Encourage professional associations in developing countries.
- Foster leadership roles among stakeholders
- Create a program of small grants to build EE&C capacity in NGOs
- Plan gradual pull-outs from country projects to allow projects to become sustainable

### Research

- Continue to build environmental behavior-change models drawing from experience in other fields
- Provide global guidance for an EE&C research agenda
- Explore the extent to which "heating up" an issue leads to behavior change
- Monitor projects more frequently with smaller samples and adjust course mid stream

### Programs

- Use self interest messages (contests, prizes etc.) to lay the groundwork for other approaches
- Develop EE&C strategies, methods, and tools to promote policy
- Use new information technologies
- Develop EE&C strategies to support international environmental conventions and treaties
- Build regional coalitions around common themes such as water conservation in the Middle East
- Create a global GreenCOM Award for EE&C excellence
- Maintain a dedicated core team for global leadership in EE&C

## TAG Praises Approach

enthusiasm. In Tanzania and Nepal, GreenCOM helped local people create video letters of their concerns over specific environmental issues, which were delivered to national leaders. In Nicaragua, GreenCOM helped develop a set of collector's postage stamps picturing scenery from national parks. Many Nicaraguans had never before seen pictures of their country's wild areas—which were now legitimized on stamps. In El Salvador, GreenCOM and the ministry of Environment drew 1,000 people to a national "encounter"—a day of workshops and discussions on the environment to help shape national policy.

Another panel discussed how applied research improves environmental communication programs. GreenCOM has conducted 62 research efforts, over half of them qualitative operations research such as assessments, formative research, and pre-testing and monitoring. This research has helped develop programs that address the needs of constituents, revealing opinions and trends that may not be obvious to the casual observer.

A third panel examined the sustainability of GreenCOM projects after GreenCOM left. Many projects continued under private or public sponsorship. A newspaper supplement for children in El Salvador has been continued by the newspaper, an awards program in Gambia has continued under the environment ministry, and environmental curricula has continued to be produced and disseminated in Jordan by a non-governmental organiza-

## GreenCOM's TAG Team

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) is a voluntary advisory group of professionals and academics who are recognized experts in fields related to environment, education, and communication. Their role is to guide GreenCOMs applied research and communication work to make sure it employs the best and most current thinking from a variety of fields. The TAG meets once a year to review presentations on the previous year's projects and plans for the next year. TAG members offer advice throughout the year.

TAG members include Miguel Araujo, former minister of the Environment and Natural Resources in El Salvador; John Baldwin, head of the Institute for a Sustainable Environment at the University of Oregon; Judy Braus, director of environmental education for World Wildlife Fund; Martin Fishbein, professor at the Institute of Communications Research at the University of Illinois; Lynne Hale, associate director of the Coastal Resources Center at the University of Rhode Island; Robert Hornik, professor of communications at the Annenberg School of Communications and director of the Center for International Health and Development Communication; Magnus K. Ngoile, Director General of the National Environment Management Council of Tanzania; Paul Nowak, professor of environmental education at the School of Natural Resources, University of Michigan; and Tiahoga Ruge, director of the North American Center for Environmental Information and Communication in Mexico City.

## Officials Collaborate on Cartoon Character

by Dee Bennett

One aspect of GreenCOM's work in Egypt is to create a communications campaign on solid waste management targeted to the general public. Solid waste is recognized as a major environmental problem that government officials are anxious to solve.

Several previous attempts at campaigns by other groups were unsuccessful because they did not achieve the full support of the Ministry of the Environment and its Egyptian Environmental Affairs Agency (EEAA). Thus, in developing this campaign, GreenCOM has worked closely with these officials to assure that their knowledge and concerns are represented. In March, GreenCOM presented an ad concept for

broadcast and print to the Minister of the Environment, the head of EEAA, and their advisors and technical staff for their impressions and opinions.

The minister herself offered a creative concept for one of the main cartoon characters, Khadra, a young street smart Egyptian teenage girl. Khadra is the counterpart to one of the other cartoon character concepts, Afra, which means Dusty in Arabic. Afra, as his name implies, does not practice good solid waste management, and Khadra will teach him, cajole him, and show him how to better manage solid waste. Khadra will become the image that people throughout Egypt will recognize as a reminder to be environmentally smart about



# New EE Handbook for Tanzanian Teachers

by Irma Allen

A new environmental education handbook for teachers, with a foreword by the Principal Secretary for Education was recently released in Tanzania for a series of GreenCOM pilot projects.

USAID Tanzania is assisting the Tanzania Government to lay a foundation for natural resources management. In recognition of the importance of the role environmental education can play in this respect, GreenCOM Tanzania is supporting various environmental education activities. One effort—helping integrate EE into the school programs—is based on the new teachers' guide published in Kaswahili and soon to be published in English.

The *Teachers' Environmental Education Handbook* is a compilation of materials developed at GreenCOM environmental education workshops. It is intended as an aid to teachers in their efforts to integrate Environmental Education into school programs.

The guide will also assist school administrators in "greening" the school, making it "environmentally friendly." In addition, it encourages schools to work with their surrounding communities and undertake joint environmental projects. A final how-to section offers information on appropriate technologies such as solar cooking, compost-making, and construction of a fuel-efficient stove.

The Principal Secretary of Education, Mr. A.R.M.S. Rajabu has encouraged the use of the handbook in schools. In the book's foreword, he states, "Books are particularly in short supply. This book ... is in the right direction. It not only develops the concept of environment in its boldest sense, but also links with other related issues in an analytical way. Problem analysis, causes and consequences and how to address them in the classroom and with the general public are very important. Its simplicity, yet good coverage, provides all the basic needs for both teachers and students in primary and secondary schools.



"I highly recommend all schools and other persons interested in environmental issues to read this book and utilize the knowledge, skills, and attitude-changing information found in the book to solve environmental problems in your communities."

## Lessons in Peace Process

by Arif Ansar

Although most USAID and GreenCOM projects take place at the country level, regional projects can break new ground in promoting cooperation—and even peace among nations. For example, GreenCOM has been working with the US Geological Survey (USGS) to develop a regional curriculum on water for middle school students in Israel, the Palestinian territories and Jordan in hopes of generating increased tolerance in an area critically short of water.

Each party has formed a team of water experts, teachers, and curriculum writers. The USGS and GreenCOM have facilitated

meetings at which the WaterCare Project teams work out themes for the teaching materials, pilot testing in schools, and evaluation. The curriculum writers use information that was compiled for the region by USGS in an earlier project.

This project grew out of the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference, which launched a multilateral framework to address Middle East issues, including regional water issues. The objective has been to lay a foundation for peace by creating a dialogue among the Israelis, Palestinians, and Jordanians—the core parties.

In 1992 the US Department of State requested that the USGS

play a lead role in the US led Multilateral Working Group on Public Awareness and Conservation Project. GreenCOM was asked to provide logistical assistance for WaterCare, a curriculum project that aims to increase student awareness of water resources and water conservation and provides opportunities for the core parties to work together.

The WaterCare teams have met four times and hope to have a teaching unit completed by September. The project is also producing a 2000 calendar of artwork by students from the three parties on water issues that will include important dates in Hebrew and

## 15,000 People Participate in Tanzania Coastal Awards

by Brian Day

More than 15,000 people have done something to improve the coastal environment in five districts in Tanzania and a sixth district has recently signed up for a popular program initiated by GreenCOM and sponsored by the Tanzania government. The incentive has been an annual awards competition among schools, local governments and businesses which develop projects to enhance the environment. Awards are bicycles, wheel barrows, iron roofing sheets, and other practical items to improve the participants' communities.

GreenCOM is working with the Tanzania Coastal Management Project (TCMP), which has assistance from the University of Rhode Island Coastal Resources Center to use communications to help the policy process.



## GreenCOM Changes

● **Rick Breitenstein**, former teaching assistant at St. Mary's University in San Antonio, Texas, is GreenCOM's new Research Analyst. Rick recently received his M.A. in International Relations from St. Mary's. He takes over from Reva Schwartz who accepted a position at the U.S. Secret Service in February.

● Program Associate **Maureen Daley** joined GreenCOM in February from the Smithsonian Institution Libraries. She will be producing GreenCOM publications and maintaining the GreenCOM website. Maureen replaces Paulina Espinosa-Puig.

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# Inside GreenCOM Update



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GreenCOM's Technical Advisory Group



Minister of the Environment,  
which **inspired the Minister**  
to create a cartoon character

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Arif Ansar reports on **GreenCOM's** role in the Middle East's WaterCare project, which was developed from the 1991 Madrid Peace Conference



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